

Yoga for the Office

Introduction

- No change of clothes, No mat, No sweat!
- Learn Yoga poses, breathing, and relaxation that you can do any time, any day in the office.

Yoga in the Office is for office workers who need stress relieving and energy renewing techniques. The modern day work place can be particularly adept at throwing our life off balance so why not use an ancient, time-honored system to re-balance ourselves – Yoga. The poses for Yoga in the Office can help you tune up your mind, body, and spirit. Yoga help you stay centered and, when you stray from that place, to return to it more quickly. A regular practice of Yoga can help lower your heart rate and blood pressure, increase flexibility, improve balance, and develop stamina and endurance.

Yoga for the Office workout is:

Immediate – whenever you feel like it – no gym or club, no special props, no shower afterward

Accessible – doable by any healthy individual -- let your body be your guide. Do not force it.

Realistic – minimal of fuss, only a few minutes; anyone can take time to do a handful of stretches and relaxing breathing.

Effective – In a short period of time, Yoga can free up tight hamstrings, hunched over shoulders, cranky necks, and stressed out brains.

Learn Yoga techniques for Breathing, Relaxation, and Stretching to help you revive your energy each day. Learn techniques you can practice at your desk. These Yoga exercises are especially beneficial when you sit at a computer all day.

Where & When

- Wednesdays from 11:40 am to 12:20 pm
- From July 18 – September 19 Hoover Building Level A
- From September 26 – November 28 – TBD

Why Should I Do Yoga?

Yoga helps with:

- Flexibility
- Deep relaxation
- Feeling “centered”
- Strength building
- Cleansing internal organs (detoxifying)
- Improving circulation
- Balance and coordination
- Healing and restoring the body’s natural metabolism
- Happiness and a general sense of well-being

What is Yoga?

Yoga is a Sanskrit word that means yoking, union, or integration. Sanskrit is the ancient literary language of India. Yoga is the union or integration between mind, body, and spirit. Yoga is a science that has evolved over the last 4,000 – 5,000 years. Yoga was introduced to the United States in the 20th century and became popular in the 1970s.

Hatha Yoga is the physical form of Yoga most commonly practiced in the West. Hatha emphasizes asana (postures), pranayama (breathing techniques) and dhyana (meditation) to promote a greater sense of well being. Hatha Yoga is the healthy joining of two opposites – the mind and body. This union leads to strength, vitality, and tranquility. Today, Yoga exercise classes are held at YMCAs, Fitness Clubs, Activity Centers, and Yoga Studios for students and practitioners of all ages. A **Yogi** is someone who practices Yoga.

Namaste with hands at heart center in prayer position is the traditional Yoga greeting that acknowledges the existence of the other's innate goodness – “All that is good in me respects all that is good in you.” “The light in me honors and respects the light in you.”

Prana is the life force that flows through the **body**. **Pranayama** is the rhythmic control of the breath. Yoga breathing is a very important part of Yoga exercises.

Yoga Asana Practice

Asana is Sanskrit for "seat". The plural, asanas, is used to describe yoga postures. Modern usage of the word "asana" in the practice of yoga refers to physical postures or poses. Yoga exercises consist of a series or flow of asanas. **Vinyasa** means that poses will flow from one to another in conjunction with the breath.

Yoga is a personal practice. When you practice, your world at that time is on your mat or your chair. It is your practice so do what is comfortable to you and your body at that time. Yogis come together as a group to share energy, for motivation, and for instruction.

Listed below are traditional directions for performing asana:

- A glass of fresh water should be taken before performing asanas.
- The stomach should be empty. The following should be avoided: rich food, very dry food, very hot food, left-overs, and over-eating.
- Force or pressure should not be used while performing asanas.
- One should not go out in the cold after performing asanas.
- Lower the head and other parts of the body slowly; in particular, raised heels should be lowered slowly.
- The breathing should be controlled and always through the nose. The benefits of asanas increase if pranayama (yoga breathing) is performed simultaneously.
- Asanas should be performed in a well-lit, clean and ventilated room. The atmosphere should be peaceful.
- Light physical exercises, followed by asanas, pranayama and meditation is the ideal sequence
- Please consult with your Doctor prior to practicing Yoga with a medical condition.

Basic Yoga Breathing

Life begins with your first breath, life ends with your last breath. Breathing is the most vital thing you do in life; it is why there is life. In Yoga, breathing is considered to be the most important of all your bodies' functions. The breath connects you to the world around you, you are a part of the natural world, and your body is made out of the same elements which are found in the earth and throughout the universe.

There is a continuous exchange of material elements which takes place with each breath you take. You are, in effect, breathing the world into yourself when you inhale, but you are also breathing some of yourself out

into the world when you exhale. There are literally microscopic bits of you in every exhalation and so you share in the chemical mix of the planet with your every breath. Your breathing is like your invisible umbilical cord to Mother Earth. If that cord should ever be broken, even for a short time, you could not survive. Breath is life itself.

The lungs are like bellows which stoke the fires of life within you. The richer the supply of oxygen, the more vigorous and beautiful is the fire. By breathing deeply you are delivering more oxygen into your system thereby giving your body the vital fuel it needs to nourish all your organs and keep your body strong and healthy. In Yoga, the breath is considered to be the primary conduit of energy into the body. In Yoga this energy or life force is called Prana.

The study of breathing makes up an entire branch of Yoga called Pranayama. Pranayama was developed to study patterns of breathing and their effects on the mind and the body. You absorb Prana primarily through the breathing process, when you breathe in air you are absorbing Prana energy into your body, when you learn to breathe more deeply and effectively you will get higher levels of Prana circulating in your body. Prana may also energize your mental processes. Your breathing provides a vital link between your body and your mind.

There are several yoga breathing exercises and some are very advanced. I recommend you start with basic Yoga Breathing (3-Part Breathing or Belly Breathing). Then later, if you like, move on to some of the more advanced breathing exercises. For 3-Part Yoga breathing, first breathe into your belly then second continue to inhale and expand your chest and third exhale in reverse by emptying your chest then your belly. Allowing your lungs to fill from the bottom up will assure you of maximum air penetration and absorption. Push your belly out as you inhale to expand your diaphragm first. When you exhale, you are in effect reversing the process, by pulling the belly in at the end of the exhalation. This last movement pushes the air completely out of the lower portion of your lungs and so pushes all the toxins of the used air out of your lungs.

A Yogi measures the span of his life not by the number of years but by the number of his breaths. So slow it down, and make each breath longer to live longer.